I. Executive Summary

The Lassen – Modoc Unit includes Lassen and Modoc Counties and portions of Plumas, Shasta and Siskiyou Counties. The Unit's Fire Management Plan is intended to provide information to CDF personnel, the County Board of Supervisors, Fire Safe Councils and other stakeholders focused on solving the mutually agreed upon fire situation in problem areas.

The Lassen Modoc Unit Fire Management Plan documents the assessment of the fire situation in the unit. It includes stakeholder contributions and priorities, and identifies strategic targets for proactive approaches and project based solutions, which are defined by the people who live and work with the local fire problem. While the Unit Fire Management Plan should address local needs, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection also has legislative mandates going back to 1945 requiring it to determine the "intensity" or appropriate level of fire protection for all state responsibility areas in California *(Public Resources Code §4130).* The Unit Fire Management Plan is the Board of Forestry's way of making the California Fire Plan the unit's plan rather than "Sacramento's" plan.

It is intended to be an evolving document which can be used to provide guidelines for projects, identify potential hazardous areas or communities where the level of service might be lacking and to assist Fire Safe Councils and community groups with useful information in making their communities fire safe. This document should be used as a foundation that can be added to over the years and as a general guide for fire prevention projects within the Lassen – Modoc Unit.

The *California Fire Plan (1996)* is outlined within this document in the first section. It is the goal of this Unit to use the plan to accomplish a systematic assessment to develop "fire safe" communities and reduce the potential occurrence of devastating wildfires. In the efforts to implement the California Fire Plan, the Lassen – Modoc Unit utilizes computer based data and Geographic Information System (GIS) to comprehensively analyze fire hazards, assets at risk and the level of service, all of which are included in the Unit Fire Management Plan.

The Unit Fire Management Plan systematically assesses the existing levels of wildland protection services, identifies high-risk and high value areas that are

potential locations for costly and damaging wildfires, ranks the areas in terms of priority needs, and prescribes what can be done to reduce future costs and losses. The

assessment system has four basic components, which are discussed in greater detail later in this document. These components are:

Level of Service (LOS)
Assets at Risk (AAR)
Hazardous Forest Fuels
Historic Fire Weather

Unit Fire Plan Assessment Process

The Lassen – Modoc Unit Pre Fire Management Program has been in place since 1997. During the past seven years data has been validated and processed in order to assess vegetative fuels, assets at risk, fire weather, and level of service calculations. The assessments now include changes in the dynamics of the actual on-the-ground work accomplished. This development of the process is on going.

The development of a method for incorporating the current and past Timber Harvest Plans, Emergency Notices, Exemptions, and Non-Industrial Timber Management Plans into a GIS format is under way. The data to be collected and utilized will include the locations and types of fuels treatments in areas containing assets having the greatest value. This information can be utilized in many aspects by the unit and cooperating agencies.

Unit Fire Plan Data Layers

The Unit Fire Plan Data layer, which consists of, fuels, weather, fire history, emergency activity reporting system (EARS), assets at risk and level of service have been completed to date, but again these are fluid and dynamic in nature and must be re-validated on a regular basis.

Unit Fire Plan Integration into Daily Operations

Over the years, many of our managers and supervisors have had priorities and goals to reduce fuels around many of the communities within the Unit. The development of the Unit Fire Plan was based on the strong support and assistance from the Fire Safe Councils. Many of the ideas from these collective influences are now coming to fruition.

Key Fire Plan Players

The Pre Fire Engineer position within the unit is instrumental in working with the Fire Safe Councils and Unit personnel in the development and implementation of many of the current and proposed projects within Lassen Modoc Unit. The Battalion Chiefs, Foresters, and Station personnel also work closely with the councils to assist in grant writing, administration and preparation of the required paperwork and project monitoring.

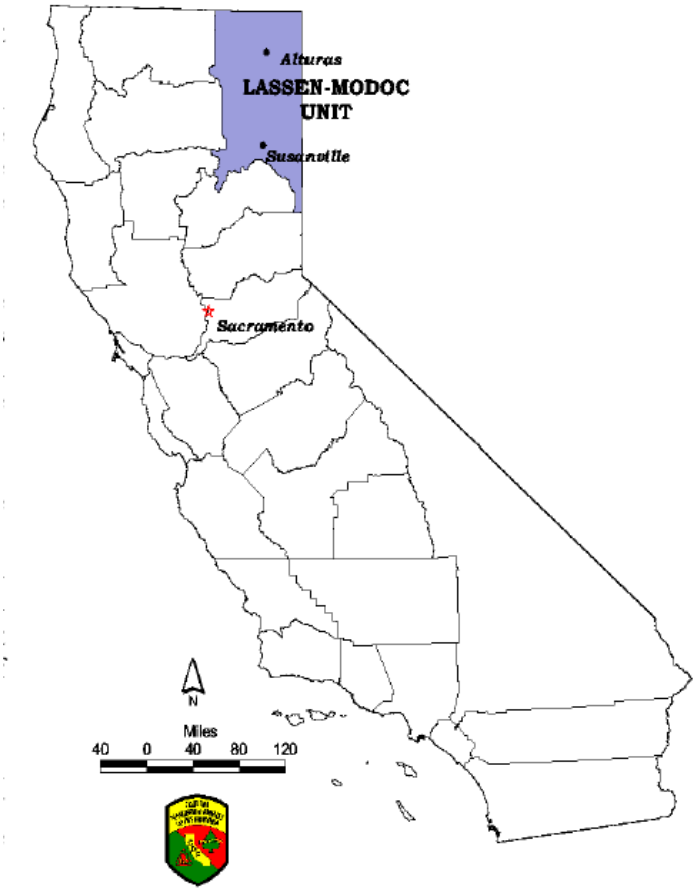
In closing, the intent of the Lassen Modoc Unit Fire Management Plan is to document the findings of the assessments, identify and document fuels management goals and communicate priorities toward solving a mutually agreed upon fire problem within the Unit. This Fire Management Plan looks at data from over a ten year span (1994 to 2004) to analyze what took place during 2004. Our fire activity for 2004 was below average for what normally occurs.

This Unit Fire Management Plan will be especially helpful to our Fire Safe Councils in supporting their future requests for grant funding and in providing a basis for many of their ongoing and proposed projects and providing the justification needed for these projects. It is the intent of this document to provide a simple, easy to understand report that will be used and will remain as a dynamic document guided by local community needs.

Don Posten
Lassen- Modoc
Unit Chief

Lassen Modoc Unit Description

Lassen-Modoc Unit is located in the northeastern corner of the State. It consists of Lassen, Modoc, and portions of Plumas, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou Counties. A total of 1.6 million acres are within the Direct Protection Area of the Unit.



The Cascade mountain range ends near the Almanor Basin. The Sierra Nevada range begins and runs to the south along the Diamond Mountains on the southwest edge of the Honey Lake Valley. The unit encompasses the Northeastern Plateau of California with an average elevation is 5000'.

Vegetation ranges from mixed conifer and ponderosa and lodgepole pines along the west side of the Unit, to sage brush, oaks, and annual grasses mixed with juniper in the desert to the east. The eastern boundary of the Unit is the beginning of the Great Basin, which continues east to the Great Salt Lake of Utah.

The majority of populated areas are located in the Honey Lake Valley, Almanor Basin, Big Valley and Alturas. The Honey Lake Valley is home to the City of Susanville, and communities of Janesville, Standish, Litchfield, Wendel, Milford, Herlong, and Doyle.

The Almanor Basin consists of Chester, Almanor, Almanor West, Prattville, Peninsula, Hamilton Branch, Canyon Dam, Clear Creek and Westwood. The Big Valley area includes the communities of Bieber, Nubieber, Lookout, and Adin. The Alturas area consists of the towns of Alturas, Likely, Canby, Cedarville, Davis Creek and the community of Cal Pines.

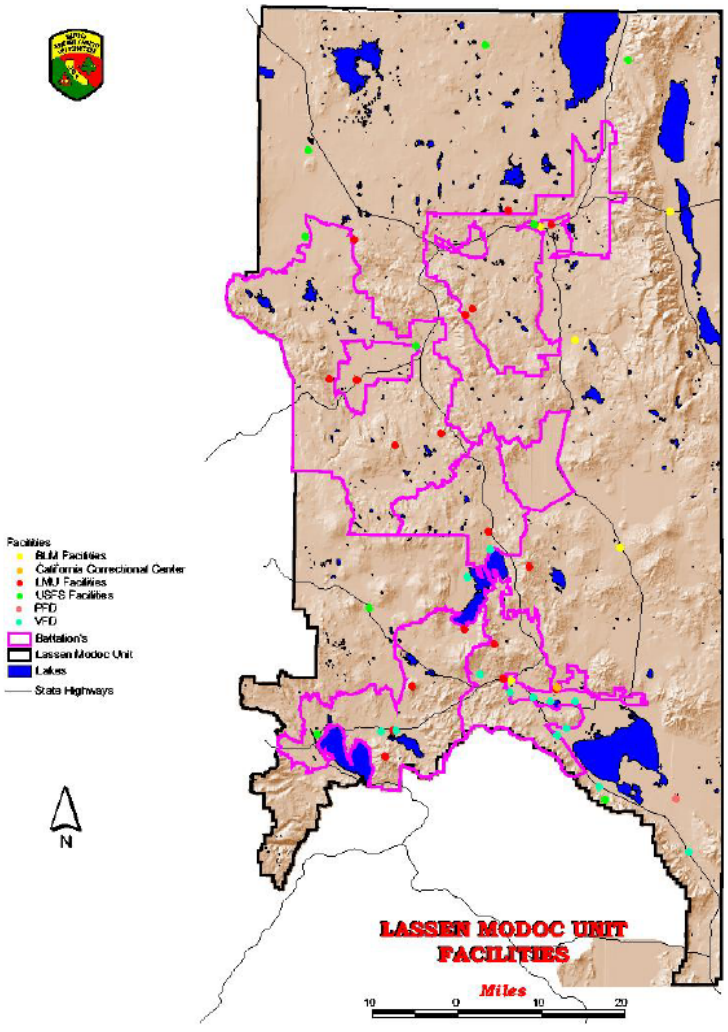
U.S. Highway 395 runs north to south along the east side of the Unit, from Lakeview, Oregon to Reno, Nevada. State Highways 139, 299, 44 and 36 transect the Unit west to east. Numerous visitors and transients travel these routes throughout the

year, as well as the interstate commerce from the Sacramento Valley and Oregon in search of a shorter way to the eastbound interstate highways.

Logging, correctional institutions and recreation are the major industrial economic factors to the region. Over the past few years, logging has diminished due to environmental concerns and regulations from the Federal and State governments. Recreation, although very seasonal, flourishes during the spring and summer months. Watershed from the Unit flows to the Feather River and the Sacramento River. Most of these watersheds are the head waters to these major rivers in the state.

The Lassen-Modoc Unit has:

8 Fire Stations
13 front line fire engines
1 reserve fire engines
5 Lookouts
3 Conservation camps
14 Inmate Fire Crews
Susanville Training Center,
3 medium bulldozers
1 medium helicopter with crew



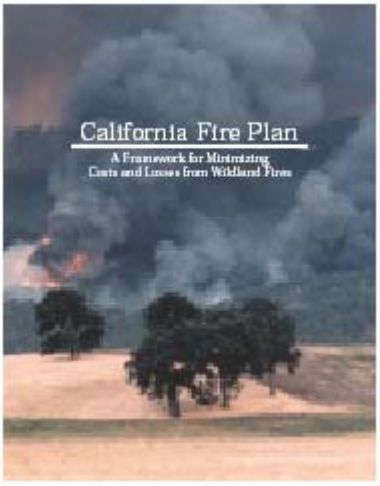
Volunteer fire departments provide structure fire protection within the unit, with paid Departments in Susanville City, Janesville, Westwood, West Almanor, Peninsula, Hamilton Branch and Chester. During the winters of 2001 through 2003, the Unit had Amador Agreements in the communities of the Standish-Litchfield, Westwood, Stones – Bogard, Bieber and Janesville Fire Protection Districts. It

The Susanville Interagency Fire Center dispatches for all of the departments in Lassen County and the Almanor Basin and the Calpines Fire District in Modoc County. The Modoc County Sheriffs office dispatches the balance of the fire departments in Modoc County.

Additional cooperating government agencies within the Unit are:

USDA - Lassen National Forest
USDA - Plumas National Forest
USDA - Modoc National Forest
USDI – Lassen Volcanic National Park
USDI – Lava Beds National Monument
USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Natural Resource Conservation Service
California Department of Fish and Game
California Department of Transportation
California Highway Patrol
Department of Defense, Herlong Army Depot
Lassen County Sheriffs Office
Plumas County Sheriffs Office
Modoc County Sheriffs Office
Public works and County offices of Lassen, Modoc and Plumas County.

THE CALIFORNIA FIRE PLAN (1996)



The *State Board of Forestry (BOF) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) drafted the California Fire Plan (1996).* This document is a comprehensive fire plan for the wildland fire protection in California. The fire plan consists of a planning process which considers: level of service measurements, assets at risk assessments, incorporates the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provides for public stakeholder involvement, and creates a fiscal framework for policy analysis.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the *California Fire Plan* is to reduce the total losses and ever increasing costs from wildland fires in California by protecting the assets at risk through focused prefire management prescriptions and improving the potential of initial attack success.

The *California Fire Plan* has five strategic objectives:

- To create wildfire protection zones that reduces the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- To assess all wildlands, not just the state responsibility areas. Analyses will include all wildland fire service providers – federal, state, local government and private. The analysis will identify high risk, high value areas, and develop

information on and determine who is responsible, who is responding, and who is paying for wildland fire emergencies.

- ❖ To identify and analyze key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes in public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total cost and losses by increasing the fire protection system effectiveness.
- ❖ To have a strong fiscal policy focus and monitor the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
- ❖ To translate the analyses into public policy.

Fire Plan Framework

Five major components will form the basis of an ongoing fire planning process to monitor and assess California's wildland fire environment.

WILDFIRE PROTECTION ZONES A key product of this Fire Plan is the development of wildfire safety zones to reduce citizen and firefighter risk from future large wildfires.

INITIAL ATTACK SUCCESS The fire plan defines an assessment protection system for wildland fire. This measure can be used to assess the department's ability to provide an equal level of protection to lands of similar type, as required by Public Resources Code 4130. This measurement is the percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs are incurred. Knowledge of the level of service will help define the risk to wildfire damage faced by public and private assets in the wildlands.

ASSETS PROTECTED The plan will establish a methodology for defining assets protected and their degree of risk from wildfire. The assets addressed in the plan are citizen and firefighter safety, watersheds and water, timber, wildlife and habitat (including rare and endangered species), unique areas (scenic, cultural, and historic), recreation, range, structures, and air quality. Stakeholders-national, state, local, and private agencies, interest groups, etc., will be identified for each asset at risk. The assessment will define the areas where assets are at risk from wildfire, enabling fire service managers and stakeholders to set priorities for prefire management project work.

PREFIRE MANAGEMENT This aspect focuses on system analysis methods that assess alternatives to protect assets from unacceptable risk of wildland fire damage. Projects include a combination of fuels reduction, ignition management, fire-safe engineering activities, and forest health to protect public and private assets. The priority for projects will be based on asset owners and other stakeholders' input and support. Prefire management prescriptions designed to protect these assets will also identify who benefits and who should share in the project cost.

FISCAL FRAMEWORK The Board of Forestry (BOF) and CDF are developing a fiscal framework for assessing and monitoring annual and long-term changes in California's wildland fire protection systems. State, local and federal wildland fire

protection agencies, along with the private sector, have evolved into an interdependent system of prefire management and suppression forces. As a result, changes to budgeted levels of service to any of the entities directly affect the others and the services delivered to the public. Monitoring system changes through this fiscal framework will allow the BOF and CDF to address public policy issues that maximize the efficiency of local, state, and federal firefighting resources.

Fire Plan Framework Applications

- Identify for state, federal, and local officials and for the public those areas of concentrated assets and high risk.
- Allow CDF to create a more efficient fire protection system focused on meaningful solutions for identified problem areas.
- Give citizens an opportunity to identify public and private assets to design and carry out projects to protect those assets.
- Identify, before fires start, where cost-effective prefire management investments can be made to reduce taxpayer cost and citizen losses from wildfire.
- Encourage an integrated intergovernmental approach to reducing cost and losses.

Enable policy makers and the public to focus on what can be done to reduce future cost and losses from wildfire.